

Fact or Fiction? Witness Interviews and New Documents Reveal Details Behind Reckless Firing Including Integrity Committee Dismissing Complaint Against Walpin

WASHINGTON D.C. – A joint report released today by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and the Senate Finance Committee Republican staff offers new insight into the political maneuvering at the White House to remove the Inspector General for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Gerald Walpin. On the heels of tough oversight by Walpin, and efforts to hold senior officials at CNCS accountable for treating lightly a friend and political crony of the President – Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson – for mismanaging charter school funds and exhibiting inappropriate sexual conduct toward students, Walpin was fired by White House lawyer Norm Eisen in contravention of the Inspector General Act.

“This firing creates a chilling effect on the efforts of Inspectors General to investigate waste and wrongdoing by those politically connected to this President,” said Rep. Darrell Issa. “The appearance of cronyism stopping a serious investigation is deeply disturbing and will have significant consequences on future investigations.”

The 62 page report, titled “The Firing of the Inspector General for the Corporation for National and Community Service,” details how prominent allies of the President were able to effectuate Walpin’s removal absent a thorough White House review. The report further describes how the White House Counsel’s Office withheld information from Congress and misled investigators after Rep. Issa and Sen. Grassley questioned the President’s methods and motives for removing Walpin.

President Obama has long championed the AmeriCorps program managed by CNCS. While candidate Obama ran for the Democratic nomination, CNCS IG Gerald Walpin was overseeing an investigation of St. HOPE Academy, a charter school founded and operated by current Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, a former NBA star and self-described friend of Barack Obama. Johnson misused AmeriCorps grants by having members wash his car, run personal errands, and engage in partisan political activities.

Walpin’s investigation of Kevin Johnson led to his suspension from receiving federal funds and jeopardized Sacramento’s eligibility for stimulus dollars. Gerald Walpin, having conducted a thorough investigation of Johnson’s misuse of federal funds, adamantly objected to any settlement of the matter that would remove Johnson’s name from the list of suspended and debarred parties. Immediately after presenting his case to the CNCS Board of Directors, the

process that would lead to his removal three weeks later was set in motion by CNCS Chairman Alan Solomont.

Alan Solomont is a prominent Democrat fundraiser with an extraordinary level of access to the White House. Solomont spoke with Eisen in the White House parking lot mere hours after hearing Walpin's objections to the settlement of the St. HOPE matter, sharing his concern that Walpin was no longer fit for his job based on his inability to answer questions during that day's Board meeting.

Eisen responded to Solomont's request for a review of his agency's IG. Walpin was fired shortly thereafter. Eisen claimed the President's decision to remove Walpin was the result of a thorough review of his performance and fitness to continue serving as Inspector General. No such evidence exists. Eisen claimed Walpin's removal was unanimously supported by the CNCS Board. The investigation shows the White House spoke with only two of nine board members.

House and Senate investigators interviewed all nine members of the CNCS Board, CNCS Acting Chief Executive Officer Nicola Goren, former Chief Executive Officer David Eisner, General Counsel Frank Trinity, Inspector General Gerald Walpin, and Deputy IG Jack Park. Investigators also reviewed thousands of pages of documents, including e-mails, letters, memoranda, Board meeting notes, print and television media reports, and public records.

The documents and interviews show that during the period between May 20, 2009, and Walpin's removal on June 10, 2009, the White House received substantive input from only three people: Chairman Solomont, a prominent Democrat fundraiser, Acting CEO Goren and General Counsel Trinity. Both Goren and Trinity were targets of the IGs criticism. The White House did not seek substantive input from the Board and did not interview anyone in the Inspector General's Office. By selectively interviewing only Walpin's adversaries, any investigation the White House did was a sham.

The report released today includes new and deeply disturbing details about the circumstances that led to the White House confrontation of Walpin:

From p. 16:

Erik Jones, the St. HOPE teacher who eventually reported one of the victim's allegations to the police, r

Michelle Rhee, who is currently Chancellor of the District of Columbia Schools, was a St. HOPE board m

In 2007, AmeriCorps Member [redacted] told Ms. Wong-Hernandez that Mr. Johnson, while in [her] apar

[Click here](#) to read the full 62 page report: **The Firing of the Inspector General for The Corporation for National and Community Service**

[Click here](#) for the appended documents

